

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 549

By DeBerry L

A RESOLUTION to recognize Dr. William E. Cochran, President of the Southern College of Optometry for his honorable and astute service to the people of Tennessee on the occasion of his retirement.

WHEREAS, it is most appropriate that the members of this body should honor those estimable citizens who have performed their duties with the utmost probity, and whose efforts throughout their years of industry were dedicated to providing thoughtful and exemplary service to the citizens of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, Dr. William E. Cochran is one such distinguished individual who has served with honor and distinction during his long career in the optometric profession; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Cochran will be taking a much deserved retirement from his post as President of the Southern College of Optometry in May of 2007, leaving behind an incomparable record that present and future administrators would do well to emulate; and

WHEREAS, a native of Kosciusko, Mississippi, William E. Cochran was the son of optometrists and the grandson of an optometrist, practically growing up in his mother's office who was among the first women to pioneer in the profession; and

WHEREAS, having worked after school and weekends in his mother's office, it was little surprise that William Cochran followed in his parents footsteps, attending their alma mater, the Southern College of Optometry in Memphis, to obtain his doctor of optometry degree in 1968, while serving as president of the student body and earning the Outstanding Senior Award; and

WHEREAS, proudly serving his country, Dr. William Cochran was commissioned as a Captain in the United States Army's Medical Service Corps after graduation in 1968 and was stationed at Martin Army Hospital in Columbus, Georgia; and

WHEREAS, after completing his military service, Dr. Cochran returned to Kosciusko, Mississippi, where he practiced for 13 years and became a recognized leader in his community,

serving as president of both the Kosciusko Jaycees and Lions Club and on a local bank board in addition to performing leadership duties at his church; and

WHEREAS, highly respected by his professional peers, Dr. William Cochran is a former president of the Mississippi Optometric Association, held several leadership roles in the American Optometric Association, including Chairman of National Optometry Week in 1981, and has been active in the Southern Council of Optometrists, the Better Vision Institute, and the Tennessee Optometric Association; and

WHEREAS, named President-elect of the Southern College of Optometry in 1983, Dr. William Cochran at that time set a number of goals for his alma mater and has achieved each one: growing the reserve fund from \$2.8 million to more than \$37 million; establishing an endowment fund that now stands at \$8.5 million; maintaining affordable tuition rates for students; setting aggressive student recruitment programs that have seen student enrollment grow from 90 to 120 students annually; improving national optometry board examination passage rate from 50% to more than 90%; and increasing the graduation rate from 85% to more than 98% for the past 14 years; and

WHEREAS, during his illustrious tenure, Dr. Cochran has overseen a remarkable transformation and expansion of the Southern College of Optometry campus, which features the 55,000 square foot Eye Center; it is the only facility of its kind in the United States, and it is fully equipped with state-of-the-art technology and records more than 60,000 patient visits each year; and

WHEREAS, under Dr. Cochran's astute leadership, the Southern College of Optometry has established itself as an economic force in the Memphis area and has a \$55 million impact on the local economy according to a study by the University of Memphis Economics Department; and

WHEREAS, as a recognized leader in the field of optometric education and vision science, Dr. Cochran has served as president of the Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry, on the National Board of Examiners in Optometry, and as president of the Memphis Association of Colleges and Universities; and

WHEREAS, Dr. William E. Cochran is an active and important part of his community and is a former president of the Memphis Rotary Club, is a Rotary Reader, and is a faithful member of Emmanuel United Methodist Church; and

WHEREAS, no stranger to honors and accolades, Dr. Cochran was the recipient of the Tennessee Optometric Association's Distinguished Service Award in 2004, and after delivering the commencement address to the graduating Class of 2007 at the Southern College of Optometry on May 11, 2007, he will be awarded the honorary Doctor of Ocular Science for his outstanding contributions and distinguished service to the optometric profession and to the field of vision science; and

WHEREAS, he is also deeply devoted to his family and is most appreciative of the love, support, and companionship he shares with his wife, Carolyn, and they are the proud parents of three devoted children and one treasured grandchild; and

WHEREAS, throughout his estimable career at the Southern College of Optometry, President Cochran has demonstrated the utmost professionalism, ability, and integrity, winning the unbridled respect and admiration of colleagues, staff, and students alike; and

WHEREAS, seldom does a man of Dr. Cochran's stature walk among us; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor and commend Dr. William E. Cochran for his many years of meritorious service as President of the Southern College of Optometry, thank him for his laudable service to the good people of Tennessee, salute his professional expertise and personal excellence, and extend to him our heartfelt wishes for a happy and fulfilling retirement and every continued success in his future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.